

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

Summary on
Fourteenth Chapter
by
Swami Paramarthananda

SUMMARY (FOURTEENTH CHAPTER)

Note:

1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

[In the 13th chapter, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* said that it is the association with the *gunas* of *prakṛti* that is responsible for rebirth i.e. *samsāra* (XIII-22). In this chapter, the Lord deals with this topic elaborately and shows how one can be free from these binding *gunas*.]

In the first two verses *Kṛṣṇa* praises Self-knowledge to draw *Arjuna*'s attention. It is the greatest knowledge which takes one to the greatest goal of liberation. By this knowledge, one attains the nature of God Himself and thus becomes free from birth and death.

In the next two verses, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a brief account of creation. Blessed by the Lord (*puruṣa*), *prakṛti* gives birth to this universe. Thus, they are the universal parents from whom all things and beings originate.

From the 5th to the 18th verse, *Bhagavān* makes an elaborate analysis of the three *gunas* — *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. They are born of *prakṛti* and are responsible for the human bondage. The Lord analyses them from various angles which can be depicted in the form of a chart (page 3).

Even though all the beings have the three *gunas*, they differ because of the predominance of one *guṇa* over the other two. (It is also possible to change the proportions for which alone all the preparatory *sādhanās* are prescribed) (10).

In the 19th and the 20th verses, *Kṛṣṇa* teaches the means of transcending the *gunas*. The Lord points out that the transcendence is in the form of knowledge alone. The Self (*puruṣa*) happens to be already beyond the *gunas* (*guṇātīta*). It is the body (*prakṛti*) which has *gunas*, doership, etc. Because of identification with the body alone, the Self (*puruṣa*) seems to have *gunas*. Hence the only solution is to discriminate and own up the *guṇātīta puruṣa* as oneself (19).

SUMMARY

Through this knowledge, one discovers oneself to be free from birth, death, etc. This is liberation (20).

Arjuna asks *Kṛṣṇa* about the characteristics of a *guṇātīta* and the *sādhanā* to achieve this (21).

From the 22nd to the 25th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* answers the first question. *Guṇātīta* is one who is detached from *prakṛti*. He does not have I-notion in his body or my-notion in the world. Hence, he looks at the variations of *gunas* objectively without reacting to them (22). He remains unaffected by the opposite experiences of life like pleasure-pain, praise-censure, honour-dishonour, etc. They are the play of *prakṛti* (23,24). Being full, he does not seek anything and therefore is free from selfish activities (25). (Since a *guṇātīta* is invariably a wise man, this description tallies with the *sthitaprajña* portion of the 2nd chapter as well as the *parabhakta* portion of the 12th chapter).

Kṛṣṇa concludes by prescribing *bhakti* as the *sādhanā* to achieve this goal. (Thus, the Lord answers *Arjuna*'s second question. By the grace of the Lord one gets a *guru*. Through the *guru*, one gets the knowledge which makes one *guṇātīta*). A *bhakta* becomes fit to attain *Brahman*'s nature (*guṇātītatvam*) which is immortality and absolute *ānanda* (26, 27).

The topics discussed in this chapter are :

1. Introduction	1 to 4
2. Analysis of <i>gunas</i>	5 to 18
3. Knowledge as the means to transcend the <i>gunas</i>	19, 20
4. <i>Guṇātīta-lakṣaṇam</i> and <i>sādhanam</i>	21 to 27

Since the main topic here is the discrimination of the three *gunas* and the Self (*puruṣa*), this chapter is called *Guṇatrayavibhāga-yoga*.